

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

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FM AMEMBASSY NASSAU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5720

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETEL BF

SUBJ: GCOB REQUESTS RECONSIDERATION OF FCC RULING ON FREQUENCIES

BEGIN SUMMARY: FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF GCOB MINEXTAFF NOTE DELIVERED TO EMBASSY JUNE 25 REQUESTING ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING RECONSIDERATION OF FCC OBJECTIONS TO USE OF CERTAIN RADIO FREQUENCIES FOR PROPOSED RADIO BAHAMAS BROADCAST COVERAGE OF THE NORTHERN BAHAMAS. END SUMMARY.

QUOTE (COMPLIMENTARY OPENING) AND HAS THE HONOR TO REFER TO THE 1950 NORTH AMERICAN BROADCASTING AGREEMENT (NARBA) TO WHICH BOTH GOVERNMENTS ARE PARTY.

THE BROADCASTING CORPORATION OF THE BAHAMAS IN ORDER TO PROVIDE BROADCASTING COVERAGE FOR THE NORTHERN BAHAMAS, HAS BEEN TESTING IN FREEPORT, GRAND BAHAMA A RADIO STATION OPERATING AT 10KW ON 810KHZ. SHOULD THE TEST PROVE FEASIBLE, THEN THE BROADCASTING CORPORATION DESIRES THE PERMANENT ESTABLISHMENT OF THE STATION. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE TEST TRANSMISSION ON 810KHZ IS OMNIDIRECTIONAL.

THE BROADCASTING CORPORATION HAS CONSULTED THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (FCC) REGARDING THIS PROPOSAL. THE FCC HAS RAISED OBJECTIONS CLAIMING THAT THE NEW STATION CREATES AN INTERFERENCE WITH THE NIGHT-TIME TRANSMISSION OF STATION WKVM SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO. THE CORPORATION IS AWARE OF ITS OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE 1950 AGREEMENT WHICH WAS CONCLUDED A

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QUARTER OF A CENTURY AGO, TO PROTECT UNITED STATES MAINLAND

AND OTHER FREQUENCIES UNDER THE NARBA. THE CORPORATION HAS BEEN ADVISED THAT THIS COULD BE ACHIEVED BY MAKING THE SIGNALS DIRECTIONAL BUT AT EXCESSIVELY UNNECESSARY COSTS.

AS THE EMBASSY IS AWARE THE SERVICES OF RADIO BAHAMAS ARE MORE THAN A FORM OF ENTERTAINMENT FOR THE FAMILY ISLANDS BUT COULD BE RIGHTLY LOOKED UPON AS A VITAL LIFE LINE COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE.

IN VIEW OF GOVERNMENT'S DESIRE TO IMPROVE THE SERVICES OF RADIO BAHAMAS FOR THE NORTHERN FAMILY ISLANDS, THE MINISTRY IS CONSTRAINED TO APPROACH THE EMBASSY WITH THE VIEW OF HAVING THE OBJECTION OF THE FCC TO THE PROPOSAL OF THE BROADCASTING CORPORATION WAIVED. BECAUSE OF THE URGENCY OF THIS MATTER, THE MINISTRY WOULD APPRECIATE AN EARLY REPLY. (COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE). UNQUOTE

COMMENT: WHILE EMBASSY OBVIOUSLY NOT ABLE TO COMMENT ON MERITS OF REQUEST, MINISTRY'S VIEW THAT RADIO BAHAMAS IS MORE THAN AN ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA FOR OUT-LYING ISLANDS IS CORRECT. IN ANY CASE, EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE REPLY ASAP.
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